

Focus Intonation in Bengali

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This work attempts to investigate the role of prosody in the syntax of focus in Bangla. The aim of this study is to show the intonation pattern of Bangla in emphasis and focus. In order to do that, the author has looked at the pattern of focus without-i/o as well as with the same. Do they really pose any different focus intonation pattern from Lahiri and Cole (1999) and others or not—that is also examined in the course of the discussion. The current study reports the finding that the focus intonation in Bangla is H*L1 rather than L*Hp as reported by Hayes and Lahiri. The intonation can be accompanied by shades of meaning. Once a particular intonation contour has been isolated; its meaning can be determined by the emotional situations within which that contour occurs. According to the speaker's momentary feeling about the subject matter, most sentences or parts of sentences can be pronounced with several different intonation contours. These attitudes can vary from surprise, to deliberation, to sharp isolation of some part of a sentence for attention, to mild intellectual detachment. Intonation in Bangla can have emotive function. This is shown by the examples and figures of (18), (24) and (25) cited in the discussion. The same kind of study of Bangla can be traced in other studies as well; such as the study of Isamu Abe (1955) and Kenneth Pike (1945) would be greater importance in this regard. The focus intonation pattern with clitics and without clitics of Bangla also can be added to form our argument. The examples of (11), (19), (20), (23), (26) with clitics and other examples without clitics and relative figures prove this point. They follow uniform phonological shape of H*L1 of Bangla.

Key Words: The role of prosody, focus in Bangla, intonation pattern, prosody, clitics

1 Introduction

We see in several areas of linguistics, including pragmatics, semantics, syntax, phonology, and phonetics where intonation has been studied well. Bangla belongs to the Indo-European branch of languages, and it is an Indo-Iranian language. We can quote the words of Daniel Jones (1969): "stress may be described as the degree of force with which a sound or syllable is

uttered. It is essentially a subjective action....it involves a strong ‘push’ from the chest wall and consequently strong force of exhalation; this generally gives the objective impression of loudness.” In general sense, sentence-stress is termed when word or words in a sentence are stressed. Here, word or words sustain more prominence over others. On the other hand, in word-stress, a particular syllable or syllables of a word is/are made more prominent. With the comparison of other languages, such as English or German, we can say that Bangla is not a stress language. So it is obvious that the effect of sentence-stress is syntactically significant; it can modulate the meaning of the whole sentence. This generally shows the significant relevance with focus intonation which is the considerable concern for the whole course of the discussion.

In a neutral sentence, that is, a sentence where the speaker does not want to provide any special emphasis on any particular word, the usual stress in Bangla appears on the first important word, preferably the subject, of the sentence. The focus is on the first important word or the subject of the sentence is so much that it usually exhausts all our energy of stress-giving results in the remaining words of the sentence are left unstressed or slightly stressed. Chatterji (1921) has observed “a Bengali sentence-group viewed from the stand point of stress, has been compared to a railway train,-the first stressed syllable being one which draws the rest.” In Bangla, the subject is considered as the most important, so the subject draws the focus of attention by the stress given to it in ordinary or neutral sentences. In the same vein, one can also mention that the focus is not given if the sentence begins with a word of minor importance. In another kind of sentences, the speaker wants to single out some word or phrase to focus attention on it and that word or phrase gets the stress in the sentence. Obviously, in such cases, stress is not the only medium of expression of emphasis in Bangla. Often than not, intonation is also associated with stress. Stress and intonation are so much entangled to the extent that it makes very difficult to specify which one is the main factor for the production of the effect of special emphasis. Thus, it is better to assume that stress and intonation go hand in hand in expressing points of attention in sentences in Bangla. This also holds true for neutral sentences in Bangla and without much difference between them, both the intonation and stress remain prominent at the beginning of the sentence.

Special sentence-stress can be of two kinds; one of them is Logical, and the other one is Emotional. This means simply that the speaker desires to attach special importance to some particular words. In such cases, intonation is high at a point where stress is given. In Logical stress or contrast stress, emphasis is given on a particular word to bring out its contrast with the opposite thing or idea whereas emotional stress is used to manifest the different shades of our emotion or variation in mood. The comparative study of intonation patterns used in different types of expression in English and Bangla by Hai and Ball (1961) shows that both English and Bangla use a

falling tone for statements, Wh-questions and a rising tone for yes/no questions, requests, etc. But the real difference lies in the subtle variation of pitch within the tone group to express different shades of meaning. In neutral sentence, the first important word is focused whereas the special emotion or mood is focused in the emotional-stress type of sentences. The following examples will reveal that in logical stress or contrast, we give emphasis on a particular word to bring out its contrast with the opposite thing or idea, e.g.

(1)	oTa	amar	boi
	that	my	book

‘**That** is my book’

Here the implication is that, that one and not this one is my book. But with the shifting of the stress the meaning will change e.g.

(2)	ota	amar	boi
	that	my	book

‘That is **my** book.’

That is my book, not somebody’s book. Emphasis stress is also used to express the different shades of our emotion or variation in mood. This kind of emphasis stress in Bangla is used in exclamatory or other kinds of emotional sentences. In ordinary sentence the first important word is normally stressed. But in a sentence expressing special emotion or mood, stress is given on the word of emphasis, e.g.

(3)	tumi	jao
	you	go

‘you go’

The above expression is expressed in ordinary sentence.

(4)	tumi	jao
	you	go

‘I say, you **get out!**’

In the sentence no-4, the main focus intonation is on the word jao ‘go’ which has the meaning of showing somebody the door. Thus we can say that stress

and focus play very significant role in expressing minute differences in meaning in Bangla.

Kenneth Pike (1945) is the first American structuralist to attempt more than a pragmatic treatment of intonation. He established the 'level' approach to intonation. It differs from the 'contour' approach chiefly in that it regards relative heights of pitch as phonemic. He argues that intonational meanings are private to intonation and are not to be confused with syntactic uses to which they are put. Intonational meanings are to be diligently abstracted from the meanings of words and syntactic constructions that occur with them and from their own particular manifestations at a given place and time. Intonation characteristics may be roughly divided into several types. He mentions that some contours may be completely colorless in meanings; they give to the listener no implication of the speaker's attitude or feelings. Other intonation characteristics may be affected or caused by the individual's physiological state- anger, happiness, excitement, age, sex, and so on. A change in pitch contour will change the meaning of the sentence. The different pitch sequences imply a changed relation of the speaker to the sentence or of the sentences to the environment. According to the attitude of the speaker, the intonation meanings contribute to the intrinsic meaning of a word or is merely a shade of meaning added to or superimposed upon that intrinsic lexical meaning. The aim of this study is to show the intonation pattern of Bangla in emphasis and focus. In order to do that, the author has looked at the pattern of focus without-i/o as well as with the same. Do they really pose any different focus intonation pattern from Lahiri and Cole (1999) and others or not—that would be also examined in the course of the discussion. This can justify the focus or emphasis study and it is considered as one of the goals of this study.

It is mentioned by Hayes and Lahiri (1991) in their paper 'Bengali Intonational Phonology' that declarative intonation in Bangla does not provide any focus on any particular constituent. In phonological sense, it has the form $H^* L_1$ which means that a pitch peak occurs in the main stressed syllable and pitch falls fairly gradually. The same phenomenon is found in the current discourse-experimental focus-word of sentences irrespective of being declarative or other kinds of sentences where generally we expect to get the focus intonation. This poses problem to the account provided by them regarding other types of sentences as well. A non-final constituent which is receiving focus as a non-final P-phrase has the form $H^* L_1$ of declarative nucleus. According to Hayes and Lahiri, generally, the main stress of the sentence gets L^* followed by an Hp . The findings of the current study show that the focus intonation in Bangla is $H^* L_1$ rather than $L^* Hp$. Our experimental account provides identical feature related to English declarative intonation on a focused, non-final word. This account has the pitch fall which levels off near the end of the main stressed word. The outcome of the present study can take into consideration the content given by Pierrehumbert (1980).

The sentence of declarative nucleus given by Hayes and Lahiri (1991) in their paper is more of topicalised rather canonical structure. This can make difference in getting result-oriented matching. The account of them shows that wh-phrases are normally focused and can have L* Hp form as in yes/no question. In the light of our study, the following example (see-02) proves the point that wh-phrase which is focused can have H*L1 instead of L*Hp form.

The experimental examples of the study do not hold that (the above account) to be true. The discourse takes place between an old woman and an old man on the ill treatment meted out to them by their sons in their older age. When the old woman says about the image they have before their sons, with anger the old man asks her wife the following question:

(5) Old woman: amra oder kache upojukto noy, upoSorgo

we them to competent not burden

‘We are not at all good but burden to them’

(6) Old man: upoSorgo, amra upoSorgo?

burden we burden

‘burden, are we burden?’

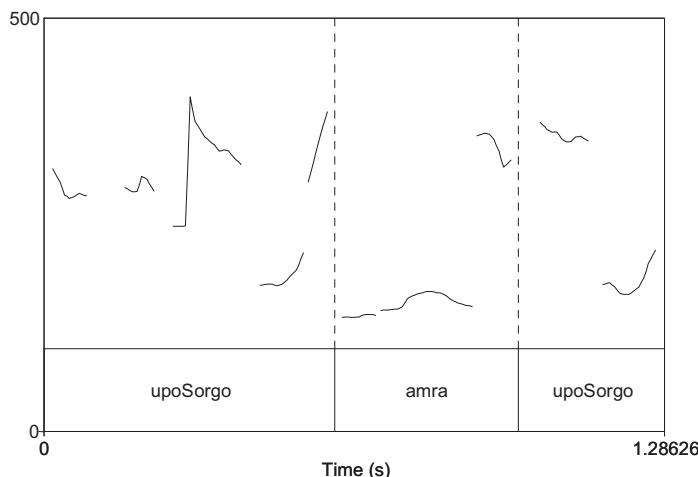


Figure 1. Representation of sentence 6

Here, the focus intonation is observed in the word upoSorgo ‘burden’. The first upoSorgo ‘burden’ is longer in duration than the second upoSorgo

'burden' as well as higher in pitch than the second one. The focused word because of its longer duration has not shown the ideal gradual fall in pitch. In the middle of the word upoSorgo 'burden', we see abrupt rise and then again fall. This can be because of the position of the fricative between the two vowels. But at the end, the focused word does not shy away from the fall in pitch which can have more or less the phonological form of H^*L1 . That is, the pitch occurs on the main stressed syllable and pitch can fall fairly gradually. The second upoSorgo 'burden' has the boundary tone which shows the rising pitch contour. In a way, this word (almost like a sentence) can be treated as yes/no question with yes/no implicit question marker *ki* 'what.' Here, *amra* (*ki*) upoSorgo 'Are we burden?' is understood.

In other example, the conversation takes place between two friends about the British regime. One of them asks the question:

(7) sumi: kOn kOtha ?
 which speech
 'what is about?'

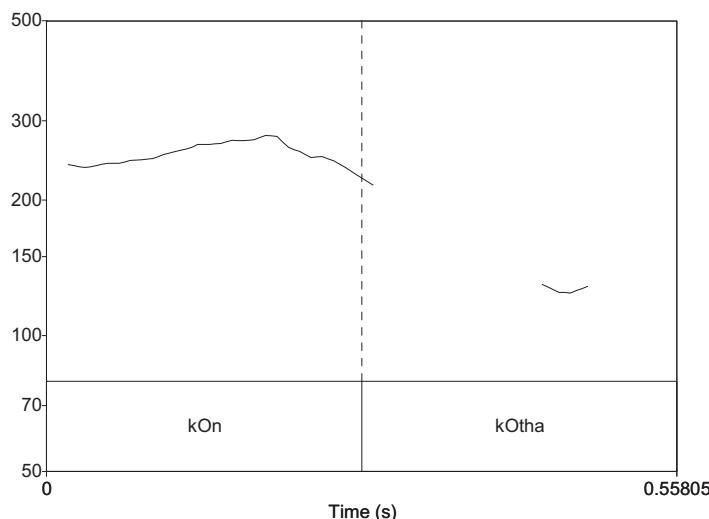


Figure 2. Representation of sentence 7

(8) Mitu: engrejder rajotta kOra Ta
the English regime do class
'The regime of the English'

In Bangla, wh-phrases are normally focused and the wh-word kon 'which' receives the nuclear stress. The focus intonation of kon has the pitch peaks and it shows that the main stressed syllable is followed by a gradual fall of speech. The focus marker H* is placed near the beginning of the I-phrase and the focus contour is H*L1 unlikely the pitch contour L*Hp provided by Hayes and Lahiri.

In another conversation, the elder sister urging her younger brother to leave this place as soon as possible. The younger brother attempts to get confirmation by asking Ekhoni 'right now':

(9) Elder sister: Ekhon-i berie poDi

right now out go

'Let us go out right now'

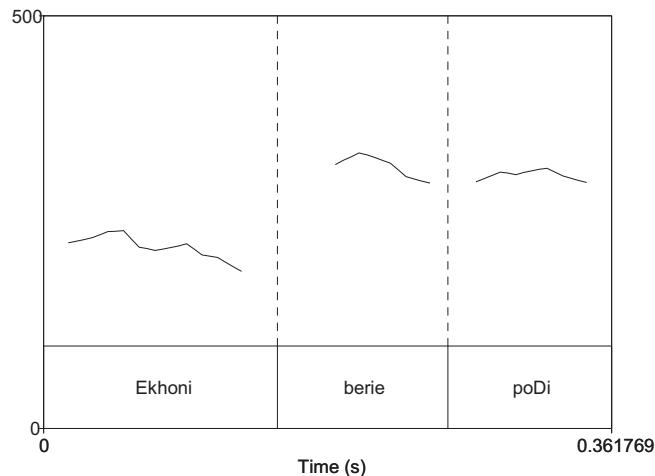


Figure 3. Representation of sentence 9

(10) Younger brother: Ekhoni?
 right now
 'Right now?'

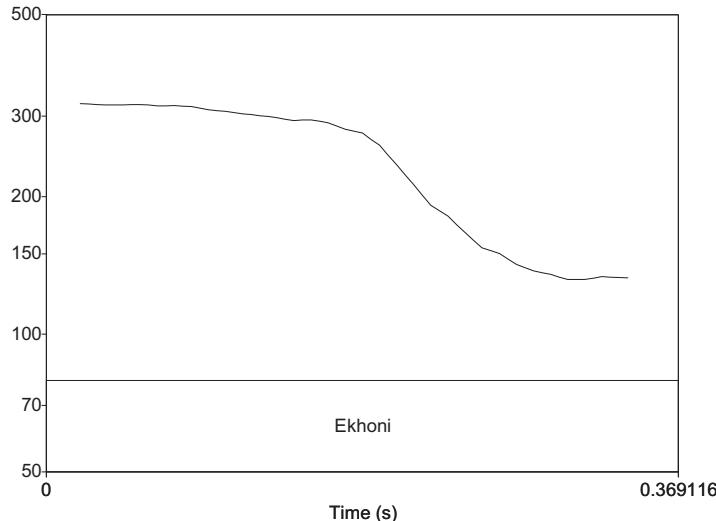


Figure 4. Representation of sentence 10

The second word Ekhon 'right now' with the clitic i 'even' out of the sentences is focused and has longer duration. It has the gradual pitch falling from 300 plus to 100 pitch (Hz). It is also noticed that it has almost identical shape of H*L1 like the first Ekhoni 'right now'

The conversation takes place among more than two persons in a family discussion. One of them criticizes somebody who is not present there. The other speaker who is present in the discussion forces him not to do the same which exasperates the former speaker. The former speaker boldly replies him back in the following:

(11) Summon: kEno ? ami ebar bhalo kore- i
 why I this time fine cp imp
 Suni-e dite parbo
 heard make give can

'Why? This time I will make him hear a good account.'

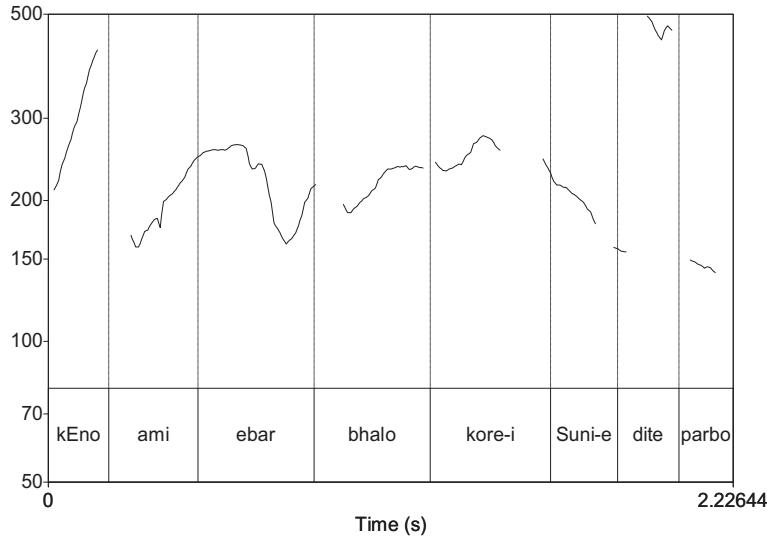


Figure 5. Representation of sentence 11

The above example has initial wh-word *kEno* 'why' which can generally have focus intonation. This wh-word is followed by clitic word *kore-i* 'by doing' and *Suni-e* 'make heard'. The focus intonation, here, in this conversation is on the clitic and has not the identical shape of H^*L1 like the second word *Suni-e* 'make heard' though the former has the longer duration. It still does not shy away from the falling pitch contour which is noticed in the phrasal boundary.

2 Literature Review

Lahiri and Cole (1991) in their paper 'Emphatic Clitics and Focus Intonation in Bengali' have given fair amount of deliberation on concerned perspective. According to them, intonationally, focus in Bangla can be signaled by the contour L^*H_p which can be identified with the focused element. They propose that clitics themselves lexically provide intonational information hinting focus in the shape of an H^* pitch accent. They have shown the result that both intonational tunes and underlying tones can exist in Bangla which do not necessarily use tones as a contrastive feature. Here, the intonational contours are thought as tunes and the general intonational terminology is consisted of the intonational phrase into nucleus and heads. In the context of neutral focus, pitch accents are always aligned to the strongest syllable of a P-phrase which in Bengali is the initial P-word of the P-phrase. On the other hand, in narrow focus, the low pitch accent of the focus contour is aligned to the initial P-word of the focused phrase.

The other important subject has been put forward by them is that Bangla obeys Obligatory Contour Principle (OCP) which does not allow a sequence of identical tones. Thus, only single peaks are seen in Bangla contours. In the context of N-V complex predicates and V-V complex predicates, the general reading as well as marked reading involves the intonation and the segment rules. They attempt successfully to prove that complex predicate constitutes a single P-phrase mentioning the case of verb and its preceding segments. The other point is proved by the instance of reduplication. They show that clitics behave differently; they are not identical to suffixes or independent P-words. The literature on the intonation of focus in English provides the account that a focused word bears a pitch accent. A constituent larger than a word may be focused, and then even the pitch assignment is identical to that of a sentence which has a single focused word.

They mention that the focus nucleus L^*H_p shows the way the focused element is formed. L^* is related to the first P-word in the P-phrase which signals the end of the focus domain. The comparison of intonation with regard to clitics in Bangla shows that they have identical regular focus nucleus like English focusing adverbs. The behavior of clitics with verbs is accounted by them in terms of the H associated with the clitic will not be H_p but with H^* which is specified in the lexical representation of the clitic itself. This means that clitic itself is part of the focus tune with the additional specification of pitch accent H^* in the phonological part of the lexical entry. They also mention that there exists a relation between the H^* tone of the clitic and the H_p of the focus nucleus, the H being a marker of focus. The only possibility remains for the clitic to be intonationally marked for focus is to have an underlying pitch accent. In general sense, the intonational structure of an utterance is associated with syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic factors. The main point which has been addressed in terms of intonational reflex of the clitics is that the clitics appear with a lexical tone not necessarily always come at the end of its focus domain. It is also mentioned by them that in Bangla, non-focus/focus distinctions can be neutralized but question/declarative distinctions are not.

Bhattacharya (2002) in his paper 'Focus Accent in Bangla Complex Sentences' observes that focus accents in Bangla can be interpreted at the interface levels. It influences the pitch contour of sentence. The Question-Answer model of discourse in terms of data from complex sentences in Bangla shows the presence of two pitch accents. This model of discourse considers well of the information structure status of the context. The structure of discourse is consisted of Questions, Answers and their hierarchical relationships. It is mentioned by him that two accents; the A- accent and the secondary B-accent which marks the background exhibit their presence in English. Actually, this account is emanated from Bolinger (1968) and Jackendoff (1972). The account of Roberts relates to two-account

phenomenon which is followed by the two account phenomenon and its relation to a “multi-layered” discourse of Kanerva and Gabriel (1996).

In order to account for focus sentences (accent) in Bangla, two types of evidence are mentioned. One is the evidence from intonational and the other is empirical evidence. He mentions by providing examples that there exists a special pitch accent which is related to the marked case. The important issues he has attempted to put forward are— greater intensity in speech signal for the P-word and longer duration of focused word. The second empirical evidence draws the conclusion that subject of the complement cannot be under contrast, but the object of the complement can be. This whole exercise implies that focus sentences are organized by a focused word within the complement sentences and the subject of the complement clauses cannot come under focus. This shows identical results with intonation evidence. That is, the subject which carries a T- accent cannot be focused where as the complementizer carrying the F- accent can be focused.

Hayes and Lahiri (1991) in their paper ‘Bengali Intonational phonology’ propose a phonological analysis of the Bangla intonational system. They observe that Bangla supports a typology of intonational tones that include only pitch accents and boundary tones like the study of Lahiri and Cole (1999). It shows that the Obligatory Contour Principle (OCP) governs the Bangla intonational contours. Here, the ‘phrase accent’ is reanalyzed as a boundary tone. The related crucial issue is that the sets of intonational tones are restricted to just pitch accents and boundary tones. The Prosodic hierarchy is used to account for the constituency relevant to boundary tone placement. They also argue that Bangla has a true phonological rule of phrase stress assignment in neutral focus contexts. Intonation contours can be analyzed as tunes and pitch accents are tone that gets linked to stressed syllables. Bangla does not show any overtly realized bitonal pitch accents. The notion of boundary tone implies that the pitch target is aligned with the actual edge of a phrase rather than a particular syllable. The phrase accent is analyzed here as a kind of boundary tone of Intermediate Phrase (IP). Bangla has phrase control juncture effects as well as the intonational pattern, so the term Phonological Phrase is considered as a better option.

In terms of Bangla stress pattern, the author has already mentioned that word-stress in Bangla follows a very simple rule, that is, the initial syllable of a word or compound words is stressed. Stress in Bengali is phonetically weak and sometimes almost inaudible. It is also mentioned that contours in Bangla are consisted with nucleus and head. Nucleus has the main stressed syllable with everything after it whereas head is everything before the main stressed syllable. In yes/no nucleus in Bangla, the main stressed syllable gets a low pitch and pitch then rises smoothly to the final syllable. In the case of focus nucleus, a particular constituent is emphasized. The focus nucleus of Bangla has the similar rise-fall shape of yes/no nucleus

except the H tone falls near the end of the focused constituent rather than near the end of the sentence like yes/no nucleus. That is, they differ in their boundary alignments and in Bangla, wh-phrases are normally focused and wh-words receive the nuclear stress. The location of the pitch peak shows that Hp is a boundary tone for the focused constituent. By providing other examples, they draw the conclusion that the L*Hp sequence in Bangla outlines focused constituents and Hp is treated as a P-phrase boundary tone. It is shown also that if the focused constituent appears in the final position, the pitch curve for the focus nucleus will have the shape as a yes/no question. Both shows the presence of H L sequence aligned with the right edge of the utterance.

In Bangla, H1 normally receives a higher pitch than Hp and as they occur in different environments, they do not contrast phonologically. This implies that Bangla has two contrastive nuclei and they differ in their phonetic pitch targets as well. It is pointed out that the offering nucleus in Bangla involves a low pitch on the nuclear syllable followed by slowly rising pitch. In declarative intonation in Bangla, a pitch peak takes place on the main stressed syllable and then pitch falls gradually almost downstep wise. They also suggest in their paper that the traditional distinction between focus stress and phonologically assigned stress have validity ground and H*L1 is represented for Bengali declarative nucleus. The declarative with continuation rise is limited to contexts of neutral phrasal stress like declarative nucleus. The downstep nucleus indicates some kind of finality. The down step nucleus appears to be limited to cases of unmarked phrasal stress, and it cannot occur in non-final phrases. The above account proves the point that identical tones do not occur in sequence in Bangla which obeys the Obligatory Contour Principle (OCP). Bangla does not show any rise + flat + rise sequences like English. Following the OCP, it is shown that Bangla lacks pitch accent Lp. The concluding points made by them; one of them is that Bangla has the same attraction of pitch accents to stressed syllables as in English. The other is Bangla intonational inventory maintains the Obligatory Contour Principle.

Isamu Abe (1955) in the paper 'Intonational Patterns of English and Japanese' edited by Dwight Bolinger, mentions that 'Intonation, on the other hand, is a phonetic manifestation (pitch being its instrument) of the attitude the speaker assumes toward the things spoken about or toward the auditor' (1955, p. 337). That is, it reflects the speaker's feelings or attitudes. This shows that functionally, tone and intonation are different from each other. Intonation can have an 'emotive' function. The purpose of it is to supply a delicate shade of meaning to the utterance. A widened pitch range suggests the speaker's heightened feelings, such as; animation, anger, etc. On the other hand, a narrowed range expresses indifference, irony etc. The widened pitch range as well as the narrowed range speaks about intonation.

Bolinger mentions that intonation contains a few arbitrary uses. He claims that much of our intonation is a cultural heritage and so ‘learned’ rather than ‘natural’. Other phonologists maintain that the relationships between tunes and feelings can be natural, not an arbitrary system of signs. It is mentioned that intonation has a value of its own as a psychological pitch curve in English. The declarative sentences of Japanese can be changed to questions merely by the superimposition of a rising intonation. This phenomenon is observed in various other languages as well. The falling intonation ranges from a frank informal request to even a brusque command whereas the rising intonation is less informal or a feeling of courteous request; however, too much ‘appealingness’ can work the other way round on the part of the speaker. In sentence-medial position either a high (or raised) pitch or a rising pitch, or a suspended level pitch in Japanese might be employed to signal non-finality and /or attention. There exists a gradual falling intonation in wh-question of information-seeking type in Japanese as well as in English. This same pattern is also used in other languages. A gradual fall is a normal colorless question asking for a piece of information. It is emphasized that the psychological channeling of voice in English and Japanese seems to have much in common, particularly in relation to ‘question’ and ‘statement’ tunes.

3 Methodology

The questionnaire design used here is based on more of discourse oriented conversations between two native speakers of Bangla. Certain emphatic words are placed in various contexts in order to get the focus intonation in a natural way. The context is patterned in such a way that would provide automatic choice of getting focus intonation. The various situations which can be responsible for producing focus intonation in natural way are carefully drawn in our discourse-sample to test the expected results. The whole enactment of the discourse was recorded on a Sony Minidisk recorder. Finally, with the help of speech analysis program Praat the whole relevant data are analysed.

3.1 The Samples of Questions-

Two friends are running their conversation without much substance in that. One of them asks the other friend and because of that, the other friend gets startled responds in the following way:

(12) suman: tor bagan dekte ja bi
 your garden see to go will

‘Will you go to see your garden?’

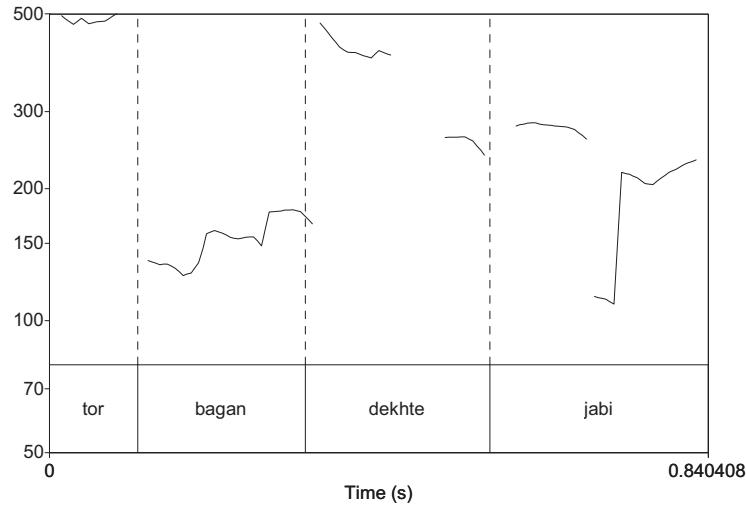


Figure 6. Representation of sentence 12

(13) sotu: *bagan!*
garden
'garden'

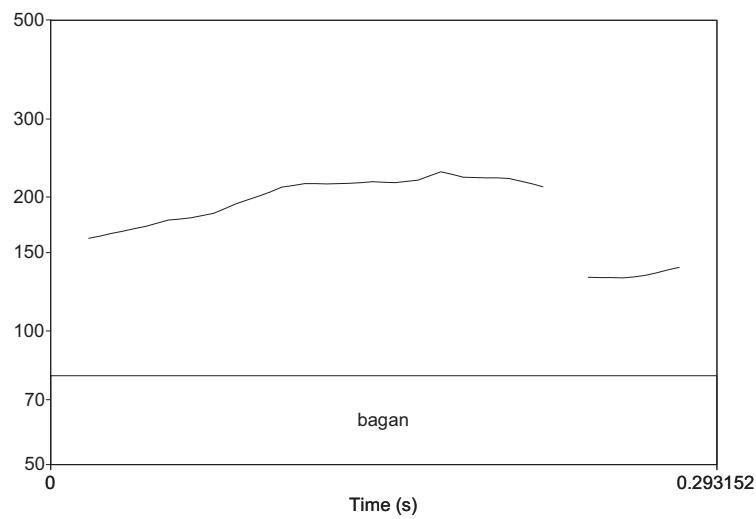


Figure 7. Representation of sentence 13

In the above example, the word *bagan* ‘garden’ gets the emphasis intonation naturally which has the form H^*L_1 and much longer in duration with a falling pitch contour. This type of surprise–context driven contexts are illustrated by Hayes and Lahiri (1991) show that they have the shape of L^*H_p . This is not a typically focus intonation but rather what Hayes and Lahiri describes as a surprise–context in their paper. In that paper, both focus and surprise–context expressions have a uniform L^*H_p pitch contour. This present study shows that the sequence contour provided by them is different from the above (general) H^*L_1 focus contour.

In another (example) situation, one of the persons is much helped by the other person. When that person acknowledges the gratitude of him, the other person expressing his benevolence is seemingly not aware of the whole episode.

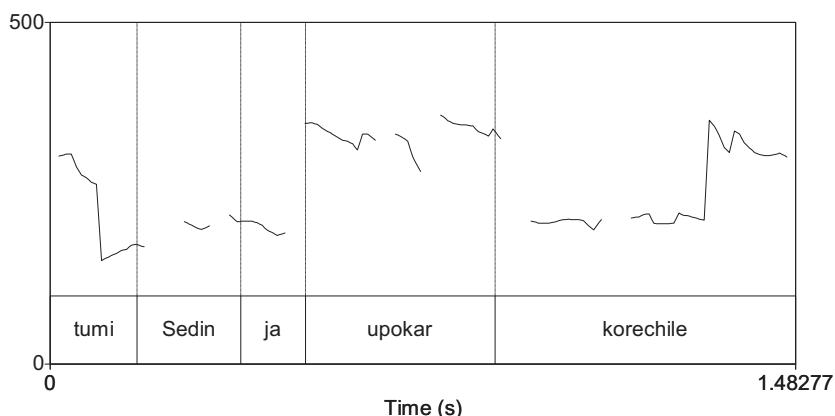


Figure 8. Representation of sentence 14

(15) Manob: ami ! ami abar ki kOrlam ?
I I again what do past
'I! What did I do for you?'

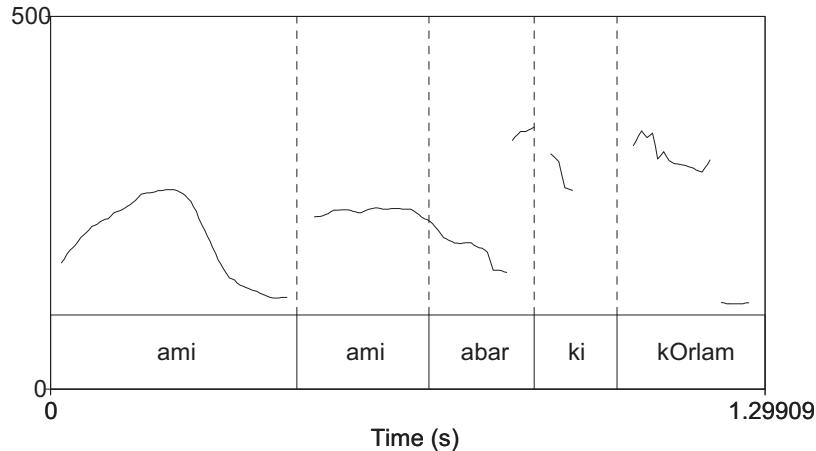


Figure 9. Representation of sentence 15

In the above sentence, the focused word is the first ami 'I' which does not exactly have the same pitch curve like the previous examples though it can be represented in the form of H*L1. The focused one is much longer in duration than the second ami 'I' and has obvious gradual fall in pitch than its counterpart.

In the following context, two friends are meeting each other after gap of many years. One of them is enquiring out of many enquiries about his friend's sister who was supposed to get married earlier. The other friend replies him back when he fails to say correctly the name of his sister in the following way:

(16) Aman: amar bone r nam SubaSi nOy, Subrota
 my sister gen name Subashi not Subrata

'My sister's name is Subashi not Subrata,

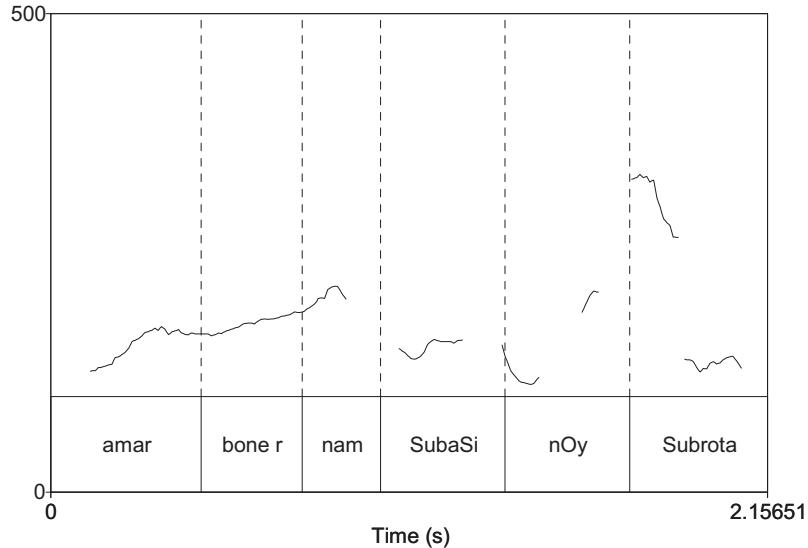


Figure 10. Representation of sentence 16

SubaSi to rothin er bon
 Subashi quota Rothin gen sister
 Subhasi is Rothiner's sister.

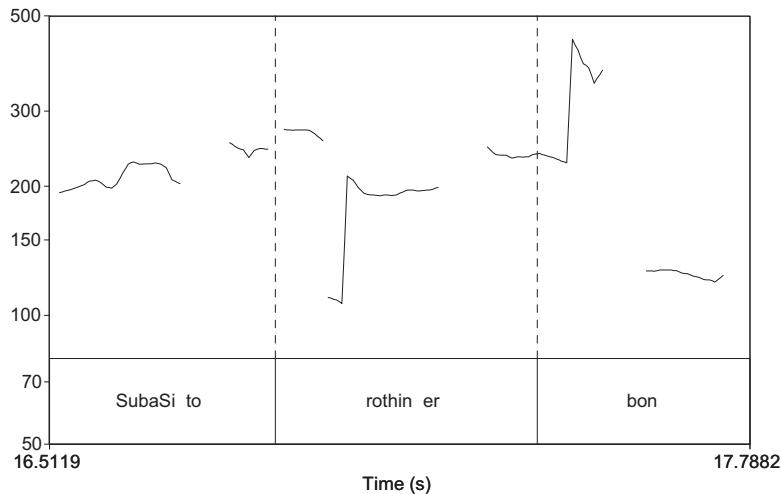


Figure 11. Representation of sentence 16 (second part)

The word Subrota ‘Subrata’ is getting focused which has the gradual rise and fall pitch contour. This shows that the focus intonation in Bangla possesses the phonological form of H*L1. This is the ideal example of this which contradicts the shape L*Hp provided by Hayes and Lahiri (1991).

In the following conversation, the speaker is surprised and shocked to hear that one of his distant relatives is expired, and he enquires very urgently about this to the other speaker in the following way:

(17) Kishore: uni mara gechen
 he die go perf

‘He is dead’.

(18) Sonu: ke ? ke mara gech en?
 who who die go perf

‘who ? who is dead?’

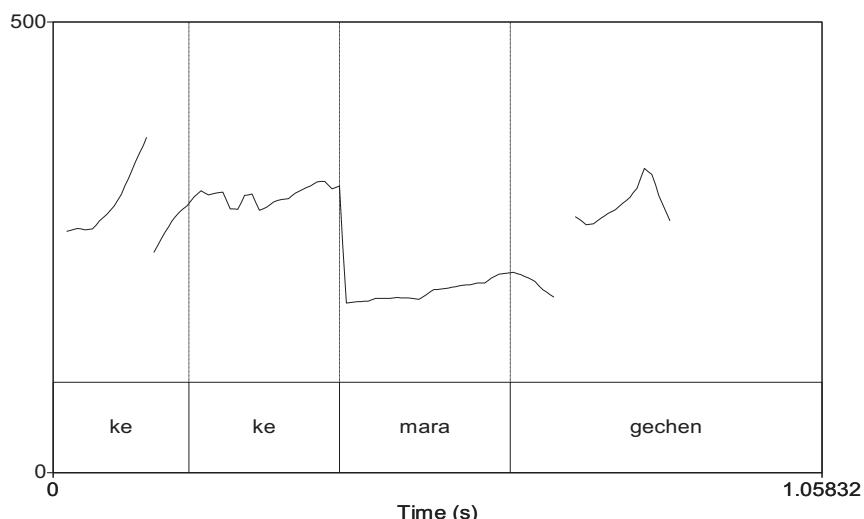


Figure 12. Representation of sentence 18

The first wh-word, in the above example, ke 'who' is getting the prominent focused and pitch (Hz) is gradually falling unlike the second wh-word which is not focused. The first Wh-word ke gets the typical question intonation whereas the second ke is in fact de-focused. The focused word has the form of H*L1.

This conversation takes place between an old man and an old woman. The old man is very much disgruntled with the modern culture and is criticizing the prevalent atmosphere of this modern era. He is in the opinion that it has totally poisoned and no longer worthy of living with it. In spite of this, there is no option before them but to accept it. The response comes from the old woman with a little hesitation in the following way:

(19) old woman: biSakto hole - o
 poisonous become clitic
 'In spite of being poisonous.'

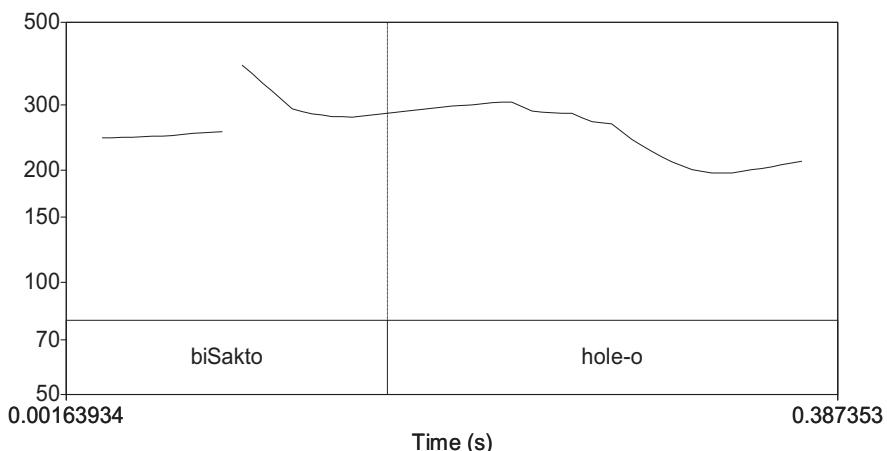


Figure 13. Representation of sentence 19

The above example shows that the other clitic of Bangla o 'also' has the same form of H*L1, and the word with focus intonation is longer in duration than its counterpart. The gradual fall in the pitch is also noticed, and a little bit rise in pitch (Hz) is observed before the end of the sentence boundary. This sentence is identical with yes/no question intonation where the implicit ki 'what' particle is perceived. Apart from this, it has the shape the author has assumed so far.

In the following conversation, one is taking into his confidence that the other person will not reveal the secrecy of the small bag (which may contain valuable commodities) to anybody else. The said argument can be augmented by the following example:

(20) sumon: ei puTl ir kOtha kaoke- e bolbi na
 this bag of speech anybody clitic tell not
 ‘Don’t tell anybody about this small bag’.

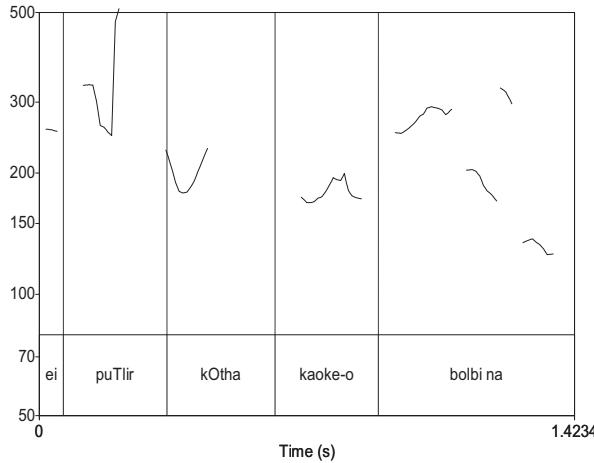


Figure 14. Representation of sentence 20

Here, the clitic word kaoke-o 'nobody' is getting focus intonation. However, as mentioned by Hayes and Lahiri, the pitch contour L^*H_p is also a plausible candidate for this focused word. The almost gradual fall in the pitch contour is also observed. This has the similar phonological shape of H^*L_1 like other examples cited above.

4 The Results of the Pilot Study

Bhattacharya (2002) has mentioned in connection with focus reading pre-verbal and post-verbal complementizer placement that the pitch accent on P-word has the form of L^*H_p with L^* tone on the main stress of the sentence. With the emphatic clitics of Bangla 0 (also) and i (even) of our focus intonation study also prove the mentioned previous account which has the phonological form H^*L_1 of declarative nucleus. The various types of situations of focus intonation discourse show uniform pattern which has contrastive nature from the account provided by Hayes and Lahiri. The peculiarity of declarative intonation mentioned by them is well accounted

here.

Two friends are discussing about the recent published poem where the subject ‘death’ is figured. One of them asks his friend about the main content of it and its significance. He replies that it is all about death. The other friend curiously enquires about it in the following way:

(21) Bimol: mrirttu !
 death

‘death.’

(22) Sani: mrirttu? tar mane?
 death its meaning

‘Death? What is the meaning of it?’

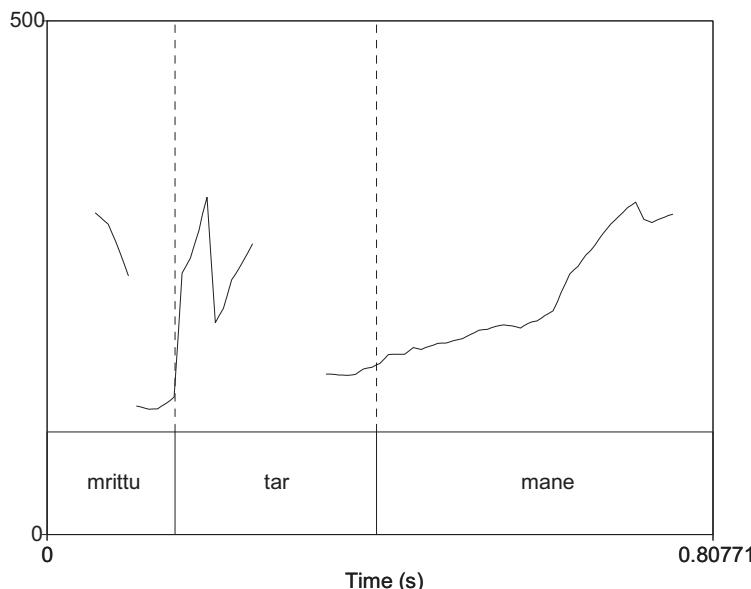


Figure 15. Representation of sentence 22

The word mrirttu ‘death’ has focus as well as question intonation (which is getting emphasized and has the focus intonation pitch with gradually falling). The focused word mrirttu ‘death’ is much longer in duration than its previous counterpart. It has allowed the phonological shape of H*L1.

The following conversation takes place between elder brother and younger brother. The elder one gives a try to deflate the ego of his younger brother. He says to his younger brother whether it is possible for him to finish the work within the time fixed or not. This no way discourages the younger one. He replies him in the following:

(23) suman: bolte hobe na, kaj ta ami i kOre felbo

say to need no work clas I clitic do cpm do perf

‘Need not to say, it is I who will have finished doing the work.’

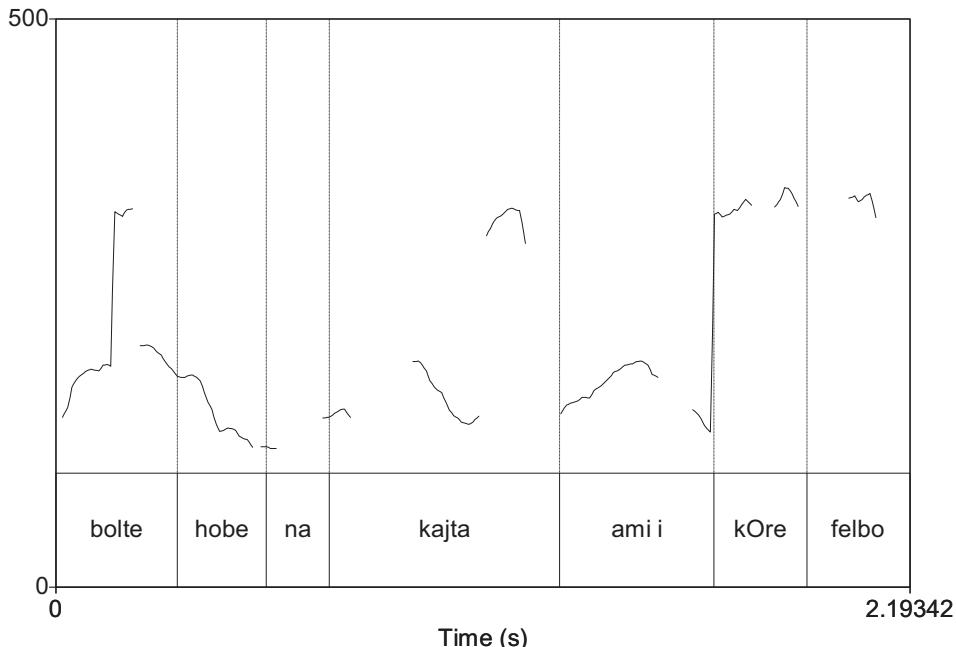


Figure 16. Representation of sentence 23

The clitic word *ami-i* ‘it is I’ is focused and also is much longer in duration. This shows the same pitch contour like the earlier examples. This example and other example follows the said H^*L1 phonological form in Bangla.

This conversation takes place between elder sister and her younger brother who is very naughty. He has already picked up some fights with his neighbors. She rescues her in that case and successful enough to get a

promise out of him that he would listen to her words by words. Agreeing on this, he replies to her:

(24) Suman: na kOkhOno kOrbo na
 no never do fut no
 'No, never I will do that.'

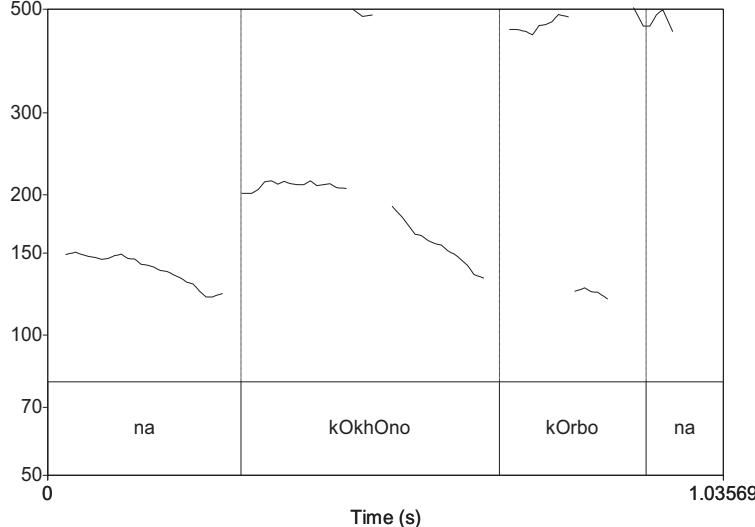


Figure 17. Representation of sentence 24

The above example has initial neg (negative) with kOkhOno 'never' which is getting focus intonation. The focused word is much longer in duration and has an ideal gradual pitch fall contour. This shows the same H*L1 pitch contour like other examples cited so far of Bangla. Thus, the above all examples show uniform pattern rather than different pattern for different situations. The main concern is to get focus intonation in natural discourse context. Thus few examples of different kinds prove to be irrelevant have been left out.

Intonation has an emotive function. This can be seen from following example. In a threatening voice, one person is making his point forcefully to the other person when the other person is expressing his innocence about the whole incident.

(25) Suman: ami kichu bujh te parchi na
I anything understand to can neg

‘I cannot understand you.’

(26) Sotu: bujhben! Shigri-i bujhben
understand very soon understand

‘Understand, you will understand very soon.’

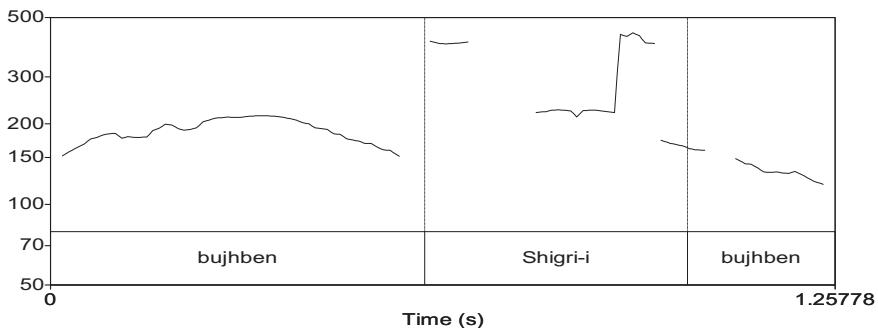


Figure 18. Representation of sentence 26

The word bujhben 'will understand' is emphasized forcefully to make the point to the other speaker; thus, it gets the focus intonation. The duration is much longer than the word with clitic Shigri-i 'very soon' as well as the other non-focused word bujhben 'will understand'. The focused word has the form similar to the shape of H*L1.

5 Conclusion

The intonation can be accompanied by shades of meaning. When a particular intonation contour has been isolated, its meaning can be determined by the emotional situations within which that contour occurs. According to the speaker’s momentary feeling about the subject matter, most sentences or parts of sentences can be pronounced with several different intonation contours. These attitudes can vary from surprise, to deliberation, to sharp isolation of some part of a sentence for attention, to mild intellectual detachment. Intonation in Bangla can have emotive function. This is shown by the examples and figures of (18), (24) and (25) cited in the above discussion. The same kind of study of Bangla can be traced in other studies as well; such as the study of Isamu Abe (1955) and Kenneth Pike (1945) would be greater importance in this regard. The focus intonation pattern with clitics and

without clitics of Bangla also can be added to form the argument. The examples of (11), (19), (20), (23), (26) with clitics and other examples without clitics and relative figures prove this point. They follow uniform phonological shape of H*L1 of Bangla.

The sole goal of the study is to get focus intonation in discourse interaction of Bangla. Instead of isolated sentences, the focus has concentrated on discourse oriented focus intonation. If we compare our account with Hayes and Lahiri, we see uniform pattern of pitch contour for focus intonation in Bangla rather than different pitch contour for different kinds of sentences. The focus intonation related pitch contour of Bangla also shows identical phonological form H*L1 of the declarative nucleus provided by Hayes and Lahiri. The findings of the study are thus justified because focus or emphasis more often than not can have emotive reason. It can be concluded from the current study that the presence of focus intonation is very much in Bangla and can play prominent role in conveying manifold shades of meaning to the other speakers in our daily conversation.

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